

Sūrah Al-Mulk

(The Kingdom)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 30 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾ ۚ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْغَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾ ۚ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ
الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوُّتٍ ۖ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۖ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ ﴿٣﴾ ۚ ثُمَّ
ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾ ۚ
وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٥﴾ ۚ وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ
جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٦﴾ ۚ إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ
تَفُورُ ﴿٧﴾ ۚ تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ۖ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ
خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾ ۚ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ ۖ فَكَذَّبْنَا
وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِنَّا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٩﴾ ۚ وَقَالُوا
لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾ ۚ فَاعْتَرَفُوا
بَذَنِّهِمْ ۖ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١١﴾ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

بِالْعَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَسِرُوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ ۖ
 إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ ۖ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ
 الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي
 مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي
 السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ ﴿١٦﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ
 فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ
 ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ
 يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفْتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ ۚ مَا يَمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ ۖ
 إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ أَمِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصَرُّكُمْ
 مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ۖ إِنَّ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي
 يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ
 يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
 وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ
 زُلْفَةً سَيَّئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدَّعُونَ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكْنِي اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا ۖ فَمَنْ يُجِيرُ
 الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابِ إِلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَّنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ
 تَوَكَّلْنَا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ
 أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا ۖ فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

the whole universe), and He is powerful over every thing, [1] the One who created death and life, so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Most-Forgiving, [2] Who has created seven skies, one over the other. You will see nothing out of proportion in the creation of the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts? [3] Then cast your eye again and again, and the eye will come back to you abased, in a state of weariness. [4] And We have decorated the nearest sky with lamps, and have made them devices to stone the devils, and We have prepared for them the punishment of Hell. [5] And for those who disbelieve, there is the punishment of *Jahannam*, and it is an evil end. [6] When they will be thrown in it, they will hear a terrible sound from it, and it will be boiling, [7] seeming as if it will burst out of fury. Whenever a group is thrown into it, its keepers will say to them, "Had no warner come to you?" [8] They said, "Yes, a warner had come to us, but We had rejected, and said, 'Allah has not revealed any thing. You are only in great error'." [9] And they will say, "Had we been listening or understanding, we would not have been among the people of Hell." [10] Thus they will confess their sin. So, be the people of Hell away (from Allah's mercy). [11] Surely, for those who have awe of their Lord without seeing (Him), there is forgiveness and a big reward. [12] And whether you keep your talk secret or make it aloud, He knows well what lies in the hearts. [13] Is it (imaginable) that He who has created (them) will not have (such a) knowledge, while He is the Knower of the finest things, the All-Aware? [14] He is the One who has made the earth submissive for you, so walk on its shoulders, and eat out of His provision, and to Him will be the Resurrection. [15] Have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He makes you sink into the earth, and it starts trembling at once? [16] Or, have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He looses a violent wind with stones against you? So, you will soon come to know how was My warning! [17] And of course, those before them (also) rejected (the truth). So, how was My censure? [18]

Have they not looked to the birds above them spreading their wings, and (at times) they fold (them) in? No one holds them up except the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). Surely He is watchful of every thing. [19] Now, who is

there to become a force for you to help you, except the Raḥmān? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion. [20] Or, who is there to give you sustenance, if He withholds His sustenance? Still, they persist in rebellion and aversion. [21] Then, tell me whether the one who walks falling down (frequently) on his face is better guided or the one who walks on a straight path? [22]

Say, "He is the One who has originated you, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. How little you pay gratitude" [23] Say, "He is the One who has scattered you on the earth, and to Him you will be assembled." [24] And they say, "When will this promise (of the Day of Judgment) be fulfilled, if you are true?" [25] Say, "The knowledge (of that day) is only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner. [26] Then, once they will see it approaching, the faces of the disbelievers will be turned awkward, and it will be said, "This is what you were calling for!" [27] Say, "Tell me, if Allah destroys me and those who are with me (as you wish), or has mercy on us (as we wish), who can (in either case) save the disbelievers from a painful punishment?" [28] Say, "He is the Raḥmān; we have believed in Him, and in Him we placed our trust. So, you will soon come to know who is in an open error." [29] Say, "Tell me if your water were to vanish into the earth, who will bring you a flowing (stream) water? [30]

Commentary

The Virtues of Sūrah Al-Mulk

Prophetic Tradition has named this Sūrah as Wāqiyah (protector) and *Munjiyah* (saviour) as well. In a Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

هِيَ الْمَانِعَةُ الْمُنْجِيَةُ تَنْجِيهِ مَنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ

"It [the Sūrah] is the protector and saviour which will rescue and redeem him who recites it from the torment of the grave." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī who has graded it as 'ḥasan, gharīb' as quoted by Qurṭubī]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"It is my heart's desire that Sūrah Al-Mulk be in every believer's heart." [[Tha'labī]

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

has said:

"Verily, there is a Surah in the Book of Allah (Qur'an) containing thirty verses that will intercede on behalf of him who recites it until he is rescued from Hell and admitted to Paradise; and it is Sūrah Tabārak." [Qurṭubī cites it from Tirmidhī].

تَبَرَّكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (Glorious is the One in whose hand is the Kingdom [of the whole universe], and He is powerful over every thing...67:1). The word *Tabāraka* is derived from *barakah*, which literally means 'to grow' or 'increase'. When it is related to Allah, it signifies 'to be highest in all respects' and it conveys a meaning similar to *Allahu Akbar* 'Allah is the Highest'.

بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ (in Whose hand is the Kingdom): The word *Yad* (hand) is attributed to Allah at many places in the Qur'an, whereas He is beyond having a body, limbs or organs. As a result, the word must, of necessity, be taken as one of the *mutashābihāt*. We need to believe in its reality, but it is not possible for anyone to grasp its exact nature. It is improper to pursue this subject. The word *Mulk* (Kingdom) refers to the Kingdom of the whole universe, of the heavens and the earth and of the mortal world as well as of the Hereafter.

The verse under comment refers to four of the Divine attributes. Firstly, His existence; secondly, His comprehending all the attributes of perfection and being most Exalted; thirdly, His being the ruler of the heavens and earth; and fourthly, His having power over everything. The verses that follow are adduced as proofs of these attributes, which become clear by pondering over the creation of Allah. Therefore, the next verses refer to the various types of creation in the universe as proofs positive of the existence and Oneness of Allah and His all-encompassing knowledge and power. To begin with, reference is made to those proofs of the divine omnipotence that are available in human beings themselves who are the noblest creation in the universe. The words *الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ* (the One who created death and life) are meant for this purpose, (as will be explained shortly). Then, several verses (3 to 5) invite consideration to the creation of heavens to find proofs of Allah's omnipotence. Thereafter, verses 15 and 16 call our attention to the creation of the earth and its

benefits. Lastly, the creatures living in the heavenly atmosphere, that is, the birds are mentioned in verse 19.

In short, the basic subject of the Sūrah is to prove the existence of Allah and His perfect knowledge and power by inviting consideration to the marvels of this universe. However, as a subsidiary subject, some other realities are also mentioned like punishment for unbelievers and reward for believers.

The proofs of the divine knowledge and power found in the man himself are indicated in the following two words:

The Reality of Life and Death

خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ (...the One who created death and life...67:2) Out of the human conditions, only two phenomena, i.e. life and death are mentioned here, because they cover all of human conditions and actions of his entire life. The creation of 'life' is quite obvious, because life is a positive reality that can be the object of creation and bringing into existence. However, one may ask how 'death' can be 'created', while it is a negative concept that refers to a state of non-existence. In answer to this question, the leading commentators have come up with different explanations. The most plausible one is that 'death' is not a state of pure non-existence. It actually refers to the removal of soul from the body and its transfer from one place to another. Thus it is a positive phenomenon. Just as 'life' is a phenomenon that relates to a human body, 'death' too is a phenomenon that overtakes him. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and other leading commentators have mentioned that 'life' and 'death' are two corporal entities. 'Death' has the corporal shape of a ram, and 'life' that of a mare. This statement apparently interprets the authentic Tradition which states that when the inmates of Paradise will have entered Paradise, and the inmates of Hell will have entered Hell, death will be brought in the form of a ram and will be slaughtered near *Ṣirāt* (the Bridge) and it will be announced that there shall be no more death, and every one shall remain in the same state eternally as he or she will have attained. It may not necessarily be deduced from this Tradition that 'death' is a corporal entity in the mortal world also. There are many abstract conditions and actions in this world, which will assume concrete shapes and bodies in the Hereafter. This is verified by many authentic

Traditions. 'Death', which is a condition that overtake man, will also assume the shape of a concretised ram and will be slaughtered. [Qurṭubī]

Tafsīr Maẓharī has stated that although 'death' is a negative phenomenon, it is not pure non-existence. It is a state of non-existence for a thing that will at some time come into existence. All such non-existent things have shapes in the World of Similitudes *عالم المثل* [*Ālam-ul-Mithāl*] before coming into existence in the realm of creation *عالم الناسوت* [*Ālam-un-Nāsūt*]. Such non-existent things are called *الاعيان الثابتة* *al-A'yān-uth-Thābitah*. On account of these shapes, they do have some sort of existence even before they come into perceived existence. The existence of the World of Similitude [*Ālam-ul-Mithāl*] has been proved by the commentator through various *aḥādīth*. And Allah knows best!

Various Categories of Death and Life

It is stated in Tafsīr Maẓharī that Allah, with His Supreme Power and Consummate Wisdom, has divided His creation into different types. Each one is awarded 'life' befitting its type. The perfect and consummate life is awarded to man, which has been invested with the capability to recognise the Divine Being and His Attributes to a specific degree. It is on the basis of this recognition that he is made liable to carry out the sacred laws of Sharī'ah, which has been termed by the Qur'ān as a 'trust'. The heavens, the earth and the mountains feared to bear the burden of this trust but man, on account of his God-given capability, bore it. The antonym of this type of 'life' is the particular type of 'death', which is mentioned in the verse:

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ

'Could it be that the one who was dead and We gave him life.
[6:122]'

In this verse, a non-believer is referred to as 'dead' and a believer as 'alive', because a non-believer has wasted his 'recognition of Allah' that was the essential characteristic of this type of life. In other types or species of creation, this quality of life is absent, but they do possess senses and capability of movement, which is the second category of life. The antonym of this degree of life is the 'death' referred to by the Qur'ān thus:

كُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

'...you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, then make you live again. [2:28]

In this context, 'life' refers to the ability to sense and move, and 'death' refers to its cessation. Some of the existent entities do not even possess the ability of sensing and movement. They merely possess the capability of growth as in the case of trees and vegetables. 'Life' is attributed to them as well in a limited sense (of growing), and as opposed to this, their 'death' is to lose the ability to grow. In this sense, the Holy Qur'an has used the words 'life' and 'death' in the following verse:

يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

'...how He brings the dead earth back to life. [30:50]'

These degrees of life are confined to humankind, the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom. No other species of creation possesses these qualities of life. Therefore, idols made of stones are referred to in the Qur'an as

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ

'- dead, having no life__[16:21]

Nevertheless, inorganic matters too have a special (though very limited) element of 'life', which is necessary to the concept of existence. It is due to this element of 'life' that the Holy Qur'an says:

وَأَنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ

'...And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise. [17:44]

This analysis also explains why 'death' in the above verse has been mentioned before 'life'. The reason seems to be that death or non-existence is the state that comes before life. In other words, everything that came into existence was in the beginning in a state of lifelessness or non-existence, then it was awarded life.

Another explanation of mentioning 'death' before 'life' could be that the verse itself has declared that the purpose of creating human death and life is 'test',

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

'...so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds.

[2]

This test is more important and is of greater significance in 'death' rather than in 'life', because the one who thinks of death constantly will have the tendency to do more and more righteous deeds. No doubt, the element of test is available in 'life' too, because every step of one's life reminds him of his own inability and powerlessness as against Allah's absolute power, which creates in him the tendency to act righteously. The thought of death, however, is most effective in correcting one's conduct. Sayyidnā 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir رضي الله عنه reports a Prophetic Ḥadīth which says:

كفى بالموت واعظا وكفى باليقين غنى

"Death is sufficient as a preacher, and certitude is sufficient as a cause of being free from needs." [Transmitted by Tabārānī]

This signifies that witnessing the death of friends and relatives is the most effective preacher. If that does not exert any influence on one, nothing else will. And he whom Allah has granted the wealth of faith and certitude is the most need-free person.

Sayyidnā Rabi' Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه has stated that the thought of 'death' makes man disgusted with this world and makes him inclined towards the Hereafter.

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (...so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds....67:2). It should be noted here that Allah did not say 'which of you does *more* deeds', but said 'which of you is *better* in deeds'. This indicates that it is not the quantity of actions that counts, but rather the quality of actions, that is, their being righteous and acceptable in the sight of Allah. That is why man's actions will not be counted on the Day of Judgement, but they will be weighed. In some instances, the weight of one action would be heavier than a thousand actions.

What is a Good Action?

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه said that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited verse [2] and when he reached the words "better in deeds", he stopped and explained that 'better in deeds' is the person who abstains most from

the things Allah has forbidden and is always ready to obey Him. [Qurṭubī]

فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُتُورٍ (So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts?...67:3). Apparently, this verse shows that it is possible to see the nearest sky with the naked eyes. Sky, in this context, does not necessarily refer to the bluish atmosphere seen over the earth. In fact, the sky may be very much higher than this, and the bluish colour may be that of the upper atmosphere, as claimed by the scientists. This, on the other hand, does not necessarily imply that the sky cannot be seen at all. It is possible that the bluish atmosphere, on account of being transparent, may not block the vision of the actual sky. However, if it is proved by any evidence that the sky cannot be seen with eyes, then the 'casting ones eyes' in this verse would refer to 'intellectual observation'. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān]

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ (And We have decorated the nearest sky with lamps, and have made them devices to stone the devils, and We have prepared for them the punishment of Hell....67:5). The word '*maṣābīḥ*' (translated above as 'lamps') stands for 'stars'. The fact that the sky is decorated with stars does not necessarily imply that they should be studded with them inside or under the sky. The decoration is available also to the situation when the stars are far below the sky in space as modern research has proved it by observation. This is not contradictory to the classical interpretation.

The statement '[We] have made them [stars] devices to stone the devils' probably implies that some fiery matters originating from the stars are used to shoot at them, and the stars themselves remain intact in their position. Since this illuminated matter seems to the common people as 'falling stars'. [Qurṭubī]. This further shows that devils who attempt to eavesdrop on celestial conversations for information are driven away before they can reach the stars. [Qurṭubī]. Thus far evidence and proofs of Allah's consummate knowledge and power were adduced with reference to the various types of creation. In the verses that follow the subject of punishment for unbelievers and of reward for believers and the obedient is taken up, thus:

وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ (And for those who disbelieve, there is the punishment of *Jahannam* ...67:6). The subject runs through seven verses.

Thereafter, the subject of Divine knowledge and power is revisited.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا (He is the One who has made the earth submissive for you ...67:15) The word *dhalūl* signifies 'submissive'. When *dhalūl* is used for an animal, it means that it is not insolent when someone is riding it. The word *manākib* is the plural of *mankib*, which means 'shoulder', which in animals refer to the upper part of their front legs. Normally, this is not the part of the animals where a rider would sit to ride them. Their back or neck are involved in riding. But an animal that offers its shoulders as well to the riders is very obedient and submissive. Therefore, the verse says that Allah 'has made the earth submissive for you, so walk on its shoulders'. Allah has made the structure of earth such that it is not liquid like water so that it flows, nor is it like mud, mire or slime, because if the earth were to be in any of these states, it would not have been possible for man to live in it. Nor is it made hard like rocks or iron, for in that state it would not have been possible for him to plough the fields to sow his crops and derive various other types of benefit from the earth. Wells and rivers could not have been dug. It would not have been possible to dig trenches into the ground to lay foundations of huge buildings. With such well-balanced infrastructure, He granted him tranquillity that it is possible for buildings to stand on it and for people, moving on its surface, to avoid slipping.

وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ (...and eat out of His provision ...67:15). After directing man to travel on earth, it is said 'eat out of His provision'. This probably indicates that commercial trips carried out for import and export are the doors for obtaining livelihood from Allah.

وَالْيَوْمِ النَّشُورِ (...and to Him is the Resurrection...67:15). This warning tells us that man is permitted to draw benefits of eating, drinking and living from the earth, but he is reminded at the same time not to be neglectful of death and life-after-death. Eventually, he will have to leave this world for the Hereafter. Whilst living on the earth, he must prepare for life-after-death. In this verse, man is warned that eventually he will return to Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The next verse warns that the Divine punishment can overtake him, even when living on the earth.

ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخِفَّتْ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ (Have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He makes you sink into the earth, and it starts

trembling at once?...67:16). It means: Though Allah has granted the earth such a balanced infrastructure that man cannot go into it without digging, yet Allah has the power to make the earth swallow up all the communities living on its surface.

The next verse warns people of another type of punishment:

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرٍ (Or, have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He looses a violent wind with stones against you? So, you will soon come to know how was My warning! - 67:17). In other words, they at the moment feel secure that the Supreme Being in the heaven will not release against them a sudden squall of stones together with violent wind. Soon they will realise how true the Divine warning was, but by the time they realise its veracity it would be too late. Now that they are safe, sound and secure, it is the time for them to give it a thought.

The next verse refers to the former nations who denied and rejected the truth and how they were annihilated by Divine scourge. Every person needs to draw a lesson from the punishment meted out to them.

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرٍ (And of course, those before them [also] rejected [the truth]. So, how was My censure?...67:18)

The next verse turns once again to the central theme of the Sūrah, that is, the description of various forms and functions of Allah's creation to prove His Oneness, His knowledge and power. Thus far human souls, forms and functions of the sky, the stars, the earth and so on were discussed. The next verse mentions birds that fly about in the atmosphere above us.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفَّتٍ وَتَبْفِضْنَ ۖ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ ۖ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ (Have they not looked to the birds above them spreading their wings, and (at times) they fold (them) in? No one holds them up except the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). Surely He is watchful of every thing...67:19)

This verse invites attention to the fact that the birds have weight, and in terms of the law of gravity, weighty bodies should fall down on the earth, if they are released from above. Normally, it is not possible for the air to hold them up. But Allah, through His consummate power, has created these birds in such a way that they can hold themselves up in the

air. Apparently, they have no intellect, but Allah has taught them the art to make the air carry their burden and to fly in it by manoeuvring their wings in such a way that at times they outspread them and at other times they fold them back. In this way they subjugate the air to their benefit. It is obvious that enabling air to hold them up, designing the wings of the birds on this particular shape and teaching them the art of controlling the air, all these functions were possible only by Allah's Supreme Creative Power.

Thus far the conditions of various categories and species of existent beings were analysed and considered in order to provide evidence of Divine existence, His Oneness, His unique knowledge and power. If a fair-minded person were to consider them carefully, he will have no choice but to believe in Allah. From the next verse up to the end of the Surah, the non-believers and the unrighteous people of all categories are warned of the Divine scourge. First, they are admonished that if Allah decides to punish any nation, there is no power in the world that can stop Him. There is no fighting force or army of soldiers that can come to the support of the disbelievers and save them. Thus the next verse says:

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ط إِنَّ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ (Now, who is there to become a force for you to help you, except the Raḥmān? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion...67:20).

Then the next verse warns the disbelievers that the sustenance Allah grants them by sending down rain from the clouds and by growing plants/ vegetation in the earth is not their personal property. It is a gift and bounty from Allah. If He wills, He can withhold it. This is the import of the following verse:

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ (Or, who is there to give you sustenance, if He withholds His sustenance? Still, they persist in rebellion and aversion. [67:21]).

The last sentence of the verse purports to express the unbelievers' sad state of affairs. They neither consider the Signs of Allah nor do they pay heed to other people's good advice. They obstinately persist in insolence and deviation from the Truth.

Next, the conditions of non-believers and believers on the field of

Resurrection are described. It is mentioned that the unbelievers will be brought to the field of Resurrection, crawling on their faces instead of walking on their feet. Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the noble Companions asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "How will the non-believers walk on their faces on the Day of Resurrection?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Is Allah who made them walk on their feet not powerful enough to make them walk on their faces and their heads?" The following verse depicts the scene of such crawling:

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (Then, tell me whether the one who walks falling down [frequently] on his face is better guided or the one who walks on a straight path...67:22).

The phrase 'the one who walks on a straight path' refers to the believer who is rightly guided. The next verse describes the manifestation of Divine power and wisdom in the creation of man, thus:

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ط قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ (Say, "He is the One who has originated you, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. How little you pay gratitude"...67:23).

Specifying ears, eyes and Heart

Of all the human sense organs, only three are mentioned here on which depends knowledge and perception of the external world. Philosophers have identified five sources of knowledge and perception that are called 'five senses': to see, hear, smell, taste or feel something. Allah has equipped man with 'nose' to smell, with 'tongue' to taste, with 'ears' to hear and with 'eyes' to see; Allah has spread 'skin' throughout man's body to feel. But out of the five physical senses, only two have been mentioned, namely, ears and eyes, because man receives a very limited range of knowledge by smelling, tasting and feeling. Man depends for information largely on hearing and seeing. Of the two organs, his sense of hearing is mentioned first, because a careful analysis shows that most of the information gathered in human life is through hearing, not so much by seeing. The third organ mentioned specifically is the 'heart', because that is the centre of knowledge. Knowledge received through hearing and seeing depends on the human 'heart', unlike the theory of the philosophers and scientists who believe that the centre of knowledge is the

human 'brain'.

After this, the non-believers are threatened with punishment. Towards the end of the Sūrah, a statement is once again repeated to remind them which purports to say: 'O you who live on the earth, dig wells and drink water from it to quench your thirst and grow plants and vegetation, do not forget that none of these things is your personal property. They are a Divine gift. He sent down water, and loaded it in the form of ice and reserved it on the peaks of mountains, so that it may not putrefy. Then He caused the congealed water to melt gradually and allow it to seep or soak into the earth through the pores or small interstices of the mountains and allowed a network of melted water to spread throughout the earth without any pipeline. Whenever man requires, he could dig a few meters deep into the earth from its upper surface to obtain water. This is a Divine gift. If He wills, He could send the water down into the depths of the earth, and it would not be accessible to anyone. This is the import of the following verse.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ (Say, "Tell me, Should your water vanish into the earth, who will bring you a flowing [stream] water?"... (67:30).

In other words, if all the water, which people draw from the wells easily, were to disappear into the depths of the earth, do they have any power through which they will be able to obtain pure running water? Obviously, the answer is negative.

It is recorded in a Tradition that when a person recites this verse, he should say

اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ "Allah, the Lord of the worlds" That is, it is Allah alone who can bring it back to us. None of us has the power.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mulk
Ends here